

James Madison to John Quincy Adams, November 15, 1811. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.

TO J. Q. ADAMS. MAD. MSS. (Private.)

Washington Novr 15, 1811

Dear Sir I have received your several favors of Feby 8, Apl 19, June 3,1 and Aug. 17, all of them in triplicates or duplicates.

1 John Quincy Adams wrote to Madison June 3, 1811, from St. Petersburg, declining the commission sent him as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. The study of law had never been congenial to him, and he had formerly declined a similar appointment in Massachusetts. He recommended in his place John Davis, of Massachusetts.— *Chicago Hist. Soc. Mss.*

I need not say how agreeable it would have been to me, and I am persuaded satisfactory to the public, if your inclination & circumstances had favored the new allotment of your services. Being ignorant of the obstacle arising from the particular state of your family, and inferring from considerations known to you, that such an exchange might not be unwelcome, I had proceeded so far in anticipating a decision different from that which took place in your mind, as to hold out the station at St Petersburg to another. It has happened that no disappointment of any sort ensued to your contemplated successor. But I ought not to omit, that I did not so far lose sight of the possibility that you might be induced to decline the new appointment, as not to have meditated a provision for that event which wd. have

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probably deprived it of its embarrassments. In the present state of things, I have only to wish that your diplomatic situation may

continue to be less incommodious than it was at first found; and that opportunities of rendering it useful to your Country may equal her confidence in the fidelity and ability which you will apply to them.

Count Pahlen has just delivered his letter of leave, in pursuance of the order of the Emperor which translates him to Rio Janeiro. His excellent dispositions, and amicable deportment, have justly rendered him so highly & universally agreeable here, that we take for granted that no doubt on that point can have been among the reasons of his sovereign for this change of his destination.

You will receive by this conveyance from the Department of State, the late communications to Congress, including the adjustment of the rusty and corrosive affair of the *Chesapeake*.¹ The pretension of G. B. which requires us as a neutral nation to assert agst. one belligerent an obligation to open its markets to the products of the other, shews a predetermination to make her orders in Council codurable with the war, for she cannot be unaware that nothing but a termination of the war if even that, will fulfill the condition annexed to their repeal. The

¹ November 1, the British Minister wrote to Monroe formally disavowing Admiral Berkeley's act and offering to restore the men taken from the *Chesapeake* to that vessel and make compensation for their injuries. The two surviving seamen were accordingly brought from Halifax, where they were in jail, and restored to the deck of the *Chesapeake* in Boston Harbor.— *Henry Adams*, vi., 122.

question to be decided, therefore, by Congress, according to present appearances, simply is, whether all the trade to which the orders are and shall be applied, is to be abandoned, or the hostile operation of them, be hostilely resisted. The apparent disposition is certainly not in favor of the first alternative, though it is more than probable, that if the

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second should be adopted, the execution of it will be put off till the close of the Session approaches; with the exception perhaps of a licence to our Merchantmen to arm in self-defence, which can scarcely fail to bring on war in its full extent unless such an evidence of the disposition of the U. S. to prefer war to submission should arrest the cause for it. The reparation made for the attack on the American frigate Chesapeake, takes one splinter out of our wounds; but besides the provoking tardiness of the remedy, the moment finally chosen deprives it of much of its effect, by giving it the appearance of a mere anadyne to the excitements in Congs. & the nation produced by the cotemporary disclosures.

It will afford you pleasure to know that the aggregate of our Crops was never greater than for the present year. The grain part of them is particularly abundant.

I tender you assurances of my great esteem and friendly respects.